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OPERATIONISM, CONSTRUCTION, AND INFERENCE [1]

IN that period of his philosophical peregrinations which we may refer to as his positivistic period Bertrand Russell wrote: "The supreme maxim in scientific philosophising is this: Wherever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities." In a preface written in 1914, Russell acknowledged: "I have been made aware of the importance of this problem by my friend and collaborator Dr. Whitehead. . . . I owe to him . . . the whole conception of the world of physics as a *construction* rather than an *inference.*" This position was elaborated by Carnap in his fine example of logical analysis, *Die logische Aufbau der Welt.* In 1931 Blumberg and Feigl could write "in every case where so-called inferred entities are invoked, the term 'inference' is meaningless." [2] Since that time enormously fruitful investigations into logical syntax, semantics, operationism, testability, meaning, probability, and related topics suggest that the earlier radical dichotomy between construction and inference and the disparagement of the latter resulted from the first blush of success in the application of newer symbolic techniques to epistemological problems. The contemporary acknowledgment among analytic philosophers that the next great field to conquer is the field of pragmatics suggests the need of a new examination of some phases of the relation of construction to inference. Any significant statements on this question presuppose a theory of concept-formation.

The general position is taken that scientific concepts are formed from the same matrix as the concepts of our everyday lives and affairs by means of definitional and quantifying techniques. Einstein has written: "So far as the way is concerned in which concepts are connected with one another and with experience there is no difference of principle between the concept-systems of science and those of daily life. The concept-systems of science have grown out of those of daily life and have been modified and completed accord-

[1] Read at the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association at the University of Washington, Seattle, December 29, 1939.

[2] A. E. Blumberg and H. Feigl, "Logical Positivism," This JOURNAL, Vol. XXVIII (1931), pp. 281–296.

ing to the objects and purposes of the science in question."[3] This fact of methodology leads to the problem of definition.

As a definition of "definition" I suggest "any rule for the use of a sign or symbol." By "rule" I mean a linguistically formulated statement. Such rules establish what is commonly referred to as "the meaning of a sign or symbol," be it systemic or designatory meaning. This wide usage is adopted in spite of Miss Stebbing's warning that to use the term "definition" so widely "that it comes to stand for any process enabling us to learn the application of words" can eventuate only in confusion.[4] If one steadily fastens on the proper rôles of logic and psychology in Miss Stebbing's statement, her dreaded outcome can be avoided.

As a definition of "concept" I suggest "the intensional rule for the extensional application of a symbol." Otherwise stated, a concept (or "term," or "construct") is a propositional function of one or more variables. This position I regard as a nominalism.

I wish to regard all definitions, and hence all concept-formation, as operational, whether in the formal or the factual sciences. This position might be clarified by the query: Is the term "operation" to be used for manipulation according to formal rules as well as according to empirical rules? My affirmative answer to this query, I realize, flies in the face of the historical origin of the terms "operationalism" and "operationism," since these terms have customarily been applied only to conceptual manipulation and application in the factual sciences. Furthermore, there is a strong belief in some quarters that use of the term "operation" for the purely formal sciences raises a grave danger of needless controversy over some kind of esoteric or metaphysical "mental operations." Some confusion might result if a clear distinction were not driven between logic and psychology on this issue.

The view is herein taken that man is a rule-regulated organism in his cognitive, symbol-using behavior. Rule-regulated activity implies that concepts are being used or applied. This viewpoint gives considerable support to the use of the term "operation" for both formal and empirical disciplines. The point must be clearly understood that rules in both cases are symbolically formulated.[5]

The term "operation" may be used so widely as to be synonymous with the term "activity." This wide usage would have little value in the present problems. Bridgman has remarked that "The

[3] Albert Einstein, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Art. "Space-Time," Vol. 21, p. 105.

[4] L. S. Stebbing, *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, 2nd ed., 1933, p. 422.

[5] My usage of the term "rule-regulated behavior" I owe to private conversations with Herbert Feigl.

word 'operation' accents the fact that the activity is usually directed activity."[6]

Stevens defines an operation operationally in this manner: "An operation is the performance which we execute in order to make known a concept."[7] Stevens then remarks that this definition is operational "because it employs what is one of the most fundamental operations, the operation of *denoting* or 'pointing to' the thing or event which the term signifies."[8]

In this connection let us consider Bridgman's operational definition of "length": "We define the length of a body in terms of the operations involving making coincidences of the ends of a meter stick moved successively along the body."[9] If anyone questions the term "meter" in Bridgman's definition, Stevens would hold that we "show" the person a meter stick, that is, we "denote a meter." The usual sense of denoting or ostension is "pointing to" any concrete instance. But this is not the meaning of the operation of denoting referred to in Stevens' operational definition of "operation" nor is it the meaning of "denoting" a "meter." Since ostension or denoting properly refers only to pointing to individual instances or occurrences to which a concept may apply, concepts can not be denoted in this sense nor can they ever be defined by pointing to anything. Such a view would make concepts analogous to proper names.

Denoting is an operation present as an ingredient in every factually-oriented symbolic situation, if the symbolic connections of that context are pushed far enough, but it does not constitute a definition of any kind of symbol. There is a fundamental ambiguity in pointing which increases with the demand for further accuracy of designation. Operational definitions do not tie a concept to a unique, concrete, single performance. The term "operation" is a concept, a propositional function; a fact which is not incompatible with operational definition but is incompatible with the usual sense of "denoting." For Stevens' definition of "operation" I suggest: "An operation is a logical manipulation or an empirical activity by means of which a concept is used or applied." That is to say, "operation" designates any rule-regulated activity in either the formal or factual sciences. In the light of this discussion, Bridgman's famous definition might read: "A concept is synonymous with the corresponding rule for the set of operations."

[6] P. W. Bridgman, "Operational Analysis," *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 5 (1938), p. 116.

[7] S. S. Stevens, "The Operational Basis of Psychology," *Amer. Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 47 (1935), p. 323.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

[9] *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

At various places in his writings on operationism, Bridgman speaks of physical, mental, verbal, pen and pencil operations. To replace this distinction between "physical" and "mental" operations I suggest the terminology "logical" or "*L*-operations" and "empirical" or "*P*-operations." Under *L*-operations I subsume all the procedures of logic and mathematics (that is, formal manipulations of symbols), while under *P*-operations I subsume the inductive, observational, manipulative, and instrumental procedures of the empirical sciences. There is here the tacit assumption that a sharp and clear distinction can be made between the purely formal systems of logic and mathematics (factually uninterpreted systems) and applied or factually interpreted systems. On that distinction is based the differentia between *L*- and *P*-operations.

There are, in short, two sides to the problem. There are the linguistic or symbolic rules and there are the rule-regulated activities of men, associated with these rules. I do not deny nor minimize the fact that these activities are performed by psychological organisms. Without human organisms and their capacity for discrimination, there would be no problem and no discussion. This fact necessitates that everything that we apprehend or perceive shall have concrete or material embodiment, such as psychological images, pencil, ink, or chalk configurations, and the like. But the formal aspects of logic and mathematics can be legitimately abstracted from all of the media in which they occur or in which they can be expressed and perceived. Logical separation or abstraction *does not*, however, imply independent existence of a material or metaphysical kind for the abstracted features. The abstracted features are relatively invariant structural or relational properties of the material manifestations. In the absence of such abstractable, recognizable forms, communication and science would be impossible.

It is a fortunate, simple fact that men find themselves in a world presenting features which can be represented symbolically, manipulated *in absentia* through these abstract, general forms and then predicted and controlled by the successful reapplication of these symbolic forms.

Operationism, therefore, is a technique for the formation of scientific concepts which requires that a concept, to be a legitimate concept of science, must be defined in such a manner that its definition is a rule prescribing definite *performable* operations for the use or manipulation of the concept. "Performable" obviously signifies "possibility of performance." I wish to accept without detailed consideration the analyses of Schlick, Reichenbach, Carnap, and others, of the kinds of "possibility" or of its negative, "impossibility." These analyses suggest four primary meanings of

the term "possibility," namely, logical, natural or empirical, technical, and psychological.

"Possibility of performance" refers not to actual, completed performance, but is rather a possibility of the logical order. By "logical order" I mean the wider usage of the term "logical" comprising both syntax and semantics of the language of science. In the usual terminology, the meaning of either formal or factual symbols is laid down by the logical rules in this wider sense.

I wish to make it clear that I do not regard this standpoint as implying a finitistic position in the formal disciplines. Otherwise stated, either finite or transfinite transformation rules are permissible. Although the viewpoint be accepted that a formal, deductive system in axiomatic form implicitly contains all of the theorems which may be proved on that basis, it is no argument against such a position if the deductive chain which explicitly demonstrates some theorem, say, Fermat's theorem, has not as yet been produced by any human being. These remarks are prompted by Russell's statement in the Preface to his new edition of *Principles of Mathematics* to the effect that finitism is an aspect of a thoroughgoing empiricism.[10] This I have denied.

Operationism as a theory of concept-formation has certain implications for the problem of construction and inference. The problem of construction and inference is the attempt to trace as clearly as possible the respective rôles of the logical construction of scientific concepts and the extension of the application of these concepts by the use of empirical inference.

Two kinds of inference can be distinguished, namely, logical inference and empirical inference. The term "inference" refers to a specific type of rule-regulated activity. Logical inferences are based on objective logical relations of logical implication or derivation between propositions or groups of propositions. Logical inference is an *L*-operation in my terminology.

Blumberg has written: "An empirical inference is a guess, a leap into the unverified. The fundamental maxim which permits (not verifies) an empirical inference is: the inferred proposition must be theoretically capable of empirical verification. . . . If the maxim is satisfied, the empirical inference is permissible."[11] That is to say, the term "empirical inference" is used for the cognitive procedure of attributing a property or properties to a given specific situation, contemporary or otherwise, a procedure reflected in the

[10] *Op. cit.*, pp. vi–vii.

[11] A. E. Blumberg, "Demonstration and Inference in the Sciences and Philosophy," *Monist*, Vol. XLII (1932), p. 581.

traditional terminology "synthetic proposition." Empirical inference is a *P*-operation.

Let us consider two experimental examples. For the first example I am indebted to Bavink.[12] If an ultramicroscope is used under proper conditions of illumination to observe certain solutions, one sees tiny points of light without perceptible form or size, that is, not directly visible in the ordinary sense. In this particular case, precipitation yields a brown mud; purification yields the familiar yellow metal called "gold." On the basis of previous experience of such situations and much theory, a construct is formed of "gold particle," a construct which contains in its definition numerous other properties or characteristics besides the macroscopic symptom of light reflection. We infer from the macroscopic to the microscopic by a complex chain of inferences that there were gold particles in suspension. Each step in this chain of inferences must be confirmable, directly or indirectly.

For a more complex case, if a sub-atomic particle is passed through a cloud chamber, leaving an ionized train of vapor particles, we proceed by various experimental devices, such as magnetic fields, and the application of theoretical systems of considerable complexity, to determine, for example, what kind of object caused the observable macroscopic phenomena or symptoms. From the direction and magnitude of deflection in a magnetic field, we infer that an electron produced these symptoms. Here again there is an inferential chain, possessing a high degree of internal connectedness, connecting macroscopic symptoms with a highly theoretical sub-atomic construct. Each step of this chain is either logically valid or empirically confirmable. The inference to an electron attributes to the situation other symptoms not directly observed, but statable as empirically confirmable inferential propositions.

In this connection there is a question which has been historically significant, and is still raised in some quarters: Do such highly theoretical and in principle unobservable objects, like the electron, really exist? An equivalent query would be: Isn't the "electron" *nothing but* a logical construction, created only for convenience in ordering, predicting, and controlling factual states of affairs? Besides calling this latter question a neat example of the reductive fallacy, I further suggest that propositions containing constructs like "electron," presumably about objects lying beyond direct visibility, are validated by a continuous chain of inferences, each of which must be confirmable. We can truly say that such constructs refer to real states of affairs, as nucleations of macroscopic, observable symptoms. They are not simply fictions introduced

[12] Bernhard Bavink, *The Natural Sciences*, 1932.

merely for the ordering and predicting of data. Concepts are constructed by definition, and then these constructs serve as heuristic principles for further investigation into the nature of the defined entities. This further investigation proceeds primarily by empirical inference. This position I contrast with the earlier quoted phrase of Blumberg and Feigl: "in every case where so-called inferred entities are invoked, the term 'inference' is meaningless."

Carnap has shown that the term "property" refers to dispositional concepts or manners of reacting. Such properties must be introduced by conditional or reductive definitions. Attribution of a property is made on the basis of certain effects observed under determinate conditions. On the basis of analyses by Carnap and Ducasse, the traditional distinction between primary and secondary properties might be made in the following way. If the effects in question can be formulated in physical language, then the property is a primary property. If the effects are psychological states, that is, can be formulated in psychological terms, then the property is a secondary property.

Each property attributed to a material thing or process corresponds to an operation or set of operations, and each different property represents a different operational and inferential route to the determination of that body or process. How is the use of a unitary concept as the focal point of several different sets of operations justified? In other words, if there are several different operational routes to the determination of a single construct, and if the construct is considered synonymous with the rule for its use, are there not as many different constructs as there are operational routes? Bridgman has recently stated: ". . . every one must agree that experience shows that there are a great many cases in which obviously different operations yield the same result, and that in practise we call by a single name the common result of all the different equivalent operations . . . for a great many practical purposes this is a most useful thing to do. . . ."[13] Such equivalences, Bridgman further states, are experimentally established and are subject to the same tentativeness and possibility of revision as other experimentally determined results. Until experiment decrees otherwise, a common name is given to the results of these different operational routes. If an experimental discrepancy should arise which care can not eradicate, then a correction factor may be used to produce the unity. But if the discrepancy persists and increases with further investigation and exactitude, then perhaps two or more different constructs may have to be distinguished and constructed out of the multiple operational routes.

[13] *Op. cit.*, pp. 121–122.

A hypothetical example of such coercion in concept-formation might be constructed on the basis of Millikan's direct determination of e, the charge on the electron, by means of his famous oil-drop experiment. This value of e was used to calculate the wave length of X-rays. The wave length of X-rays was later measured by Compton and others and their value did not agree with the value based on Millikan's determination of e. If these two different operational routes to the wave length of X-rays had given different results despite all investigation, then some conceptual distinction would have followed. Fortunately perhaps, the measurements of the viscosity of air made by Millikan in his experiment were found to be insufficiently exact.[14]

The formation of empirical concepts reveals a constant interplay of construction and inference. The concepts of science are linked with definite operational procedures, leading to established and repeatable states of affairs. The introduction of a new property into the construction of a concept as sophisticated as the electron concept means at the same time the introduction and application of additional groups of scientific laws or theories. Scientific concepts eventually are woven into compact hypothetico-deductive systems which tend to corroborate one another.

Operationism is not infrequently held to be incompatible with inference; presumably empirical inference is specifically intended. That is to say, operationism is a technique of concept-formation with an avowed anti-metaphysical bias, while the use of empirical inference definitely raises metaphysical issues. My thesis is an explicit acceptance of the former standpoint and a disavowal of the latter. Further, the implications of operationism, regarded as a refinement and sharpening of the pragmatic tradition, suggest a position which I should call *operational realism*. It is not possible to develop this position in this place, but a comment will be made.

The aim of science is to give a "logical picture" of the environment (in which we are embedded and of which we are a part), leading to prediction and control of that environment. If one surveys the manner in which concepts, hypotheses, laws, and theories are formulated on the basis of the experience of psychological organisms (utilizing the theory of signs), then the "reality problem" can be regarded as an attempt within the framework of empiricism to make no statements in which the constructs, directly or indirectly, are without experienceable designata. Operational realism, therefore, reduces to the thesis that only by operationism can one consistently, significantly, and successfully insure that cognitive state-

[14] Karl Compton, "The Electron: Its Intellectual and Social Significance," *Nature*, Suppl. Vol. 139 (1937).

ments eventuate (by operational controls) in discriminable states of affairs. It will be recalled that inductive procedures were included in *P*-operations. I agree with the writers who hold that there is no "reality problem" in any other sense.

Operationism has been defined, therefore, in such a manner as to permit its application wherever scientific procedures apply. This statement implies that I see no difficulty, methodologically speaking, in the application of operational controls to cognitive formulations in biology, in the widest sense of that term.

In conclusion, operationism is a genuine relativism and an integral part of the philosophical movement called scientific empiricism. From this perspective, operationism is the technique of concept-formation and analysis which best fits existing practices and seems to promise most for future advances. It is a phase of the widespread revolt against poorly defined or wholly undefined concepts and the professedly cognitive assertions which contain them. Operationism not only provides a means or criterion for avoiding the undesirable elements in scientific thought, but it also explains the undesirability of such elements from the standpoint of empiricism.

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SELFISHNESS AND UNSELFISHNESS

IT is a familiar fact of everyday life that "selfish" and "unselfish" are used to condemn and exhort morally, and without some such basis it is unlikely that philosophical theories of egoism and altruism would ever have arisen. But here as so often philosophy meets an ironic fate; it presently generalizes itself out of sight of its original evidence. Even some of the more careful ethical views need supplementation by common sense on this point.

Butler's discussion of "self-love" and benevolence is undoubtedly a classic, and his distinction between reflective selfishness and the "particular passions" is a permanent contribution to the subject, however over-simplified psychologically. But his argument is aimed primarily against the egoism of Hobbes and the Epicureans, rather than toward a direct clarification of the plain man's convictions. For this reason, I believe, he arrives at a position quite at variance with general opinion when he holds that "self-love" must be "cool" and the "particular passions" all equally disinterested.[1] By his own admission it is the latter which cause most

[1] He does make a brief admission that it may be permissible to speak of "passionate" selfishness, but does not adopt this usage himself (*Sermons*,

trouble in the world,[2] and surely they are the source of that "hoggishness," as James liked to call it, which is the type of selfishness for common sense. For convenient reference I shall call this *naïve*, in contrast to *reflective*, selfishness. Those passions are naïvely selfish, then, which are usually directed toward something which in fact mainly enhances the agent's own experience—food or attention, for instance.[3] Of such is the selfishness of little children.

Now I believe that common sense does tend to label certain classes of impulses "selfish" or "unselfish"—e.g., addiction to drink, or to charity—but when it comes to judge particular actions it considers actual effects rather than motives, and employs a criterion of what might be called *objective* selfishness, in contrast to the subjective types just named. With allowance for accident, it condemns those actions which unduly exclude or injure the interests of others, regardless of whether the agent is thinking of himself or not.[4] A child which will not share its toys, a mother who will not let her daughter become independent, a tennis-player who cheats, is selfish from the viewpoint of the plain man. This is the case even when the motive is known to be deliberate self-interest. "Business is business" was the sacred cow of American morals not long since. The business man was admittedly, gloriously out for his own profits, yet no 100 per cent. American called him "selfish," and anyone who suggested nobler motives was a laughing-stock. Why? Because, far from being improperly exclusive in their satisfaction of interest, the acts of the business man were thought to be publicly beneficent.

We are now in a position to examine the possible forms of ethical

Preface). Cf. C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 70 f. C. S. Peirce rightly censures the habit of calling selfishness a form of love (*Coll. Papers*, VI, pp. 191, 193). The Christian doctrine of the three lusts is nearer to common sense than is Butler.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

[3] Vague at best, this definition is offered only for purposes of exposition. For a more precise analysis see Broad, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 ff. It is doubtful whether any naïve desire functions always selfishly or always unselfishly, and most impulses vary so much in this respect that any rigid division of them into two categories is hopeless. This is a further difficulty for ideals of pure selfishness or unselfishness discussed below.

[4] There is much in recent thought to support common sense against Butler here. It is now a commonplace that consciousness may give a very distorted version of one's real character and conduct. I think that Butler insists upon the reflective type of selfishness partly because he assumes that "self-love" must be hedonistic (*Sermons*, 6th ed., London, 1792, pp. 8 n., 17, 19, 167 f., 170 f., 178 f., 206 f.). From this it follows that the chief sources of pleasure, the particular passions, are independent of self-love because prior to the desire for pleasure. Bradley also thought of selfishness in hedonistic terms at first, but changed later (*Ethical Studies*, 2nd ed., p. 308).

egoism. A life of *absolute* egoism would evidently have to consist of reflective selfishness making full use of all naïvely selfish impulses (and only these), and achieving maximum objective selfishness. But such an ideal turns out to be self-contradictory: each factor, if given absolute sway, would limit the rest. Reflective selfishness obviously has to check naïve urges; it spoils their gusto; and, as Butler and others have conclusively argued, it must make use of benevolent urges also, if it would obtain its maximum. Conversely, unrestricted naïve selfishness is disastrous from the standpoint of reflection. And as for objective selfishness, the greatest possible exclusion of the interests of others could only be the work of a demonic malevolence which would sacrifice the greater part of naïve as well as reflective self-interest.

The most egoistic ideal could therefore be, at best, not absolute but only "pure"; it would consist of some combination of reflective and naïve selfishness, exclude even the naïvely benevolent urges, and therefore issue in some degree of objective selfishness—barring accident. Stirner approximates to this position; he sacrifices richness of experience for the sake of exclusive possession. Interesting as an intellectual experiment, such misanthropy, which cuts off its own nose to spite its face, is not likely to be more formidable in ethics than solipsism in epistemology—a scarecrow to frighten the enemy.

For reasons already given, a life of selfishness that would be wholly reflective or wholly naïve is out of the running also. The only form of ethical egoism which has had, or is likely to have, much appeal, is one in which tactful reflection guides all impulses, benevolent included, toward an ideal of maximum self-fulfilment. But egoism thus tamed is relatively harmless, arbitrary, and indeed something far above common attainment.

It is harmless because, as is well known, self-interest has only to become sufficiently enlightened to refrain from practically all acts that are wrong by ordinary standards, and to do most to that are right. The ethic of self-realization would hardly have been so widely defended if such were not the case. Even hedonists and near-hedonists have done very respectably in this way: so Butler and Professor Stace.

A predominantly reflective egoism is arbitrary because once I have adopted the reflective attitude there is no reason for limiting ultimate consideration to my own good. Reason is naturally concerned with good anywhere, no matter in whose garden it may grow. We have seen that the real source of selfishness is the hoggishness of naïve desire. Reflection, as Plato would suggest, is typically selfish only under the tyranny of such desire. But re-

flective egoism has renounced such tyranny: it has therefore lost its only ground for being ethically ultimate.

In practice, of course, we are seldom adequately rational even in our own interest, and this is why reflective egoism is a comparatively lofty ideal. That most universal of particular passions, laziness, is private enemy number one. Even on a hedonistic basis, as Samuel Butler somewhere remarks, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of making ourselves as comfortable as we might. How much more true for that moral self-love which Aristotle commends for desiring a lion's share of virtue! Both the Butlers and Nietzsche are right: in a proper sense men are not selfish enough.

Turning now to unselfishness, we may remark at once that, though reference to other persons introduces further psychological complexities, the possible forms of altruism have a structure largely symmetrical with those of egoism. This has not been given adequate attention. Bishop Butler indeed recognizes a general "principle" of benevolence in addition to particular benevolent affections like compassion, but he does not develop the point.

If we may accordingly distinguish objective and subjective, naïve and reflective types of unselfishness, the emphasis of common sense is clearly on the objective variety, as in the case of selfishness. When a woman forgoes amusements and wears herself out in good works she is praised for unselfishness, no matter how much she modestly protests that she would rather do that than anything in the world—*pace* Kant. But not everyone who is not condemned for selfishness is commended for unselfishness; so the terms are contraries, not contradictories, and can not be synonymous with right and wrong.

Absolute unselfishness has been commended by some as *the* supreme ethical ideal, sole panacea for the world's ills. It is a pity that life is not so simple. Granted the possibility of utter unselfishness, the fact remains that the altruistic sentiment varies notoriously in its scope. Unless altruism is tempered with justice it will not even meet ordinary standards of morality. Fanatical devotion to the interests of *some* others is the root of much evil, and is—perhaps as much as indirect self-regard—at the bottom of the phenomenon of group-egoism which the panacea of altruism is supposed to cure.

But absolute unselfishness is no more possible than absolute selfishness. Reflective altruism and naïvely benevolent impulses get in each other's way. Moreover the former must also use naïvely selfish passions on occasion, lest it partially defeat its own end. I shall be nicer to other people if I treat myself well. If I am unwilling to take from others as well as to give I shall be thwarting *their* benevolent urges—we all know the mulish altruist who is a

nuisance because he refuses to let us do him good. And fullest objective altruism requires that our taking the gifts of others shall not be a benevolent humbug, as adults sometimes humor children with delight in a well-intended mud pie. Taking must be genuine, with not too much of an eye on the other fellow. At times it needs to be far more than simple acceptance of what is offered, namely, an aggressive, imperious demand, as in a man's love for a woman. Women like saints in their way, but they do not choose them for husbands if they can help it. We may also recall Bernard Shaw's remark that a world in which everybody tried to do a good turn daily would be intolerable: here, too, absolute unselfishness implies a state of things which no kind person could wish on his neighbor, however ready to suffer for the cause himself.

There is a metaphysical barrier as well. Altruism by definition involves another person; unless we are distinct beings there is no altruism at all, merely selfishness, as in absolute idealism. But if we are distinct, my understanding of my neighbor is inevitably (to use the politest word) perspectival; so is my action upon him. Is not this the worst of unselfishness as it usually comes, that it is unimaginative and thrusts an alien will upon us? So runs Nietzsche's critique of pity, and the Hon. T. V. Smith has wittily continued his detection of power-drives in conscience itself. The wisest and most tactful kindness can hardly be perfect except by happy accident.

There is nothing for it. Our stubborn altruist can only hope for purity, not absoluteness. In so doing he will in fact sacrifice the good of others to his own innocence—like Pascal, who would "*servir les pauvres pauvrement*" [5]—thereby revealing himself as an inverted egoist after all. This betrays the essential negativity which Nietzsche was first to discover in extremely altruistic ideals; indeed the ugly term "unselfish" suggests as much. Such an attitude expresses more hatred of self than love of others. Finally nature plays a trick on the purist which makes an end even of his purity: if he really avoids all taint of selfishness he will cease to breathe.

In general, the case of the less extreme forms of altruism parallels those of egoism. The ideal of *naïve* benevolence has indeed been espoused by some moralists—of whom Rousseau, in one of his moods, is the type—but it rests on a hopelessly sentimental view of nature, human and inhuman. Wholly *reflective* altruism would lack fire; in fact it would forbid itself the only materials through which an imaginative understanding of others is possible. Predomi-

[5] "Vie de Blaise Pascal," in Pascal, *Pensées et opuscules*, ed. L. Brunschvicg, Librairie Hachette, Paris, n.d., p. 28.

nantly reflective altruism is more acceptable, though in conduct it would be hardly distinguishable from the corresponding form of selfishness. But, as we have seen, unless reflection adds justice to benevolence, it is inadequate; and once we have acknowledged justice there is no reason for not being just to ourselves. So the prevailing view among moralists today is surely correct, that some form of universalism is more satisfactory in ethics than any type of either egoism or altruism.—The real problem is, of course, what form?

I imagine that much of the appeal of altruistic ethics is due to its confusion with Christian doctrine in the popular mind. One should be hesitant in generalizing about a tradition which has embraced so many views, but neither the oldest scriptures nor the most venerable ecclesiastical authorities of Christianity teach pure altruism. Self-sacrifice, enshrined in the symbol of the Cross, is indeed made a supreme virtue appropriate to certain phases of life, but it is not a universal formula for all right conduct—"there is a time for all things." The saying about losing and finding one's life is apparently addressed to reflective self-interest. "Great is your reward in heaven" runs through the Gospels like a moral refrain. The plainest command of all is simply to love one's neighbor *as* one's self.

Altruism became prominent in ethical theory, on the contrary, in the eighteenth century and attained its extreme forms—Schopenhauer, Comte, Tolstoy—in the nineteenth, when religion was decaying among the educated and working classes. The connection is surely significant. Men transferred to humanity that absolute affection which the Christian owed only to God.

My conclusion on the whole matter is that we had better drop "selfishness" and "unselfishness," "egoism" and "altruism," altogether as categories of moral approval and disapproval. They may have a crude utility for common sense, but that is outweighed by the harm which such thoughtlessly repeated catch-words do. In suggesting a clear-cut antithesis where none exists they prompt the neglect of much "selfishness" that is right and the toleration of much "unselfishness" that is wrong. They lead men to overlook possibilities for sharing *common* goods. To speak of all naïve impulses as either selfish or unselfish, as in the preceding exposition, is to commit a similar fallacy. Indeed the whole picture of so many atomic "selves" is a quite unnecessary caricature of human existence.[6] This is true in a sense even more profound than that urged by Dewey and Bradley. The singularity of man is only one vector

[6] Cf. Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, rev. ed., New York, 1932, pp. 324–336.

in the quadrant of life's forces: we are dual in marriage, plural in work and play, collective in our supreme loyalties and inspirations.[7]

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COMMENTS AND CRITICISM

AMONG the problems raised in Professor Schneider's review of my book[1] and in his subsequent letter I will take up what seems to me the central point. He writes: "To make an 'active principle' out of a quality of action is precisely what Dewey is attacking." This would seem to be a correct statement of Dewey's view. But I can not share this view. For let us turn to the facts themselves. What is here meant by "quality"? When looking at a young dog, you certainly perceive something more than inert matter. There is an *Ausdruckspha̋nomen,* an expressional quality: you are aware of a living being. There is an *organic quality* characterizing this piece of matter. And it is perceived—whatever Dewey says—as a principle of spontaneity, vitality, creativity. The actions of the organism are felt to express a vital dynamism, to be inspired by a living soul. Similarly, passing from animal to human life, we perceive a new type of qualities. We recognize actions as belonging to the human type by the fact that they have meaning, intent, purpose, i.e., by the fact that they are preceded by and take place under control of symbolic activities and have thus "directed quality." Look at any human being around you: you perceive that his actions "mean" something, that they have mental quality, that they express not only life but also mind. Here again I can not see how anyone could possibly deny that these qualities are perceived as actively inspiring behavior.

If you grant that organic qualities exist in nature, the level of physico-chemical causality has been transcended. This is not a matter of empirical observation but of logical analysis of categories. As soon as a physical explanation of an event is found, it is classified as a merely physical event; what had been supposed to be the behavior of an organism would henceforth be looked upon as a piece of dead matter. (Witness the dissolution of animism.) A similar categorial cleft exists between behavior of the human type and behavior of the animal type. Either there is intent, meaning, purpose, or there is not—nothing intermediary is conceivable. The

[7] Cf. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Multiformity of Man,* Hanover, N. H., 1936 (from lectures delivered at the Lowell Institute, Boston, 1935).

[1] *The Philosophy of John Dewey. A Critical Study.* This JOURNAL, Vol. XXXVI (1939), pp. 586–587.

"emergence" of meaningful behavior is indeed, in Dewey's phrase, a wonder. Unless you deny that there *are* organic qualities in nature, you will have to maintain that physico-chemical causality has been transcended. Manifestly, a recognition that they do not exist in nature, would be synonymous to no longer perceiving them there. (A "necessary illusion" is a *contradictio in adjecto.*) The same holds true of mental qualities: either they are what they seem, or they are not at all in nature. The only way of avoiding self-contradiction is to take at its face value our immediate sense of activity, of freedom, of spontaneity and creativity. Since we do discriminate between a bodily and a conscious aspect of our own activities and those of others, and since the sense of initiative, of activity, is more closely connected with the conscious aspect, we can not but attribute a "leading" function to the latter.

FOLKE LEANDER.

GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN.

BOOK NOTES

Le Livre de Ethiques d'Aristotle. NICOLE ORESME. Edited by Albert Douglas Menut. New York: G. E. Stechert & Co. 1940. xii + 547 pp. $6.00.

Nicole Oresme, who died in 1382 as Bishop of Lisieux, is of historical interest by reason of his important contributions to mathematics, mechanics, and economics, and also because he was the first translator of Aristotle into the French language. His translations, made at the request of the enlightened Charles V of France, included the *Ethics,* the *Politics,* the *Economics,* and the *De caelo et mundo.* The first of these translations, completed in the year 1370, and accompanied by a brief running commentary by Oresme, constitutes the *Livre de Ethiques* here edited.

Since Oresme knew no Greek, he had to depend on the best Latin version of Aristotle's *Ethics* available in his day. This was the *Vetus translatio,* made from the Greek by Robert Grosseteste around the year 1245. In most of the medieval copies of this Latin version, there is included a marginal or interlinear gloss translated from an eleventh-century Byzantine commentary by Eustratius, Michael of Ephesus, Aspasius, and an anonymous Greek commentator. Oresme draws quite constantly on this gloss for his own comments and elucidations of the text, though he also cites and utilizes the Expositions or Questions on the *Ethics* composed by Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Walter Burley, and John Buridan. Oresme's gloss or commentary is for the most part limited to the task of clarifying the meaning of obscure passages;

only rarely does he raise or discuss questions of philosophical interpretation.

Professor Menut's edition is based on the oldest extant manuscript, conserved in the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique as Ms. No. 2902, and bearing the date 1372. The other sixteen known manuscripts, as well as the very rare printed edition of 1488, were examined by the editor, and such variants as affect the reading are given. Apparently all the manuscripts are descended from a single original, since their variations are few and of accidental nature. In consequence, Professor Menut has been able to provide a very readable text, not overladen with critical apparatus.

In an extensive Introduction, the editor draws on the results of his own investigations and on the most recent scholarship, to give an account of Oresme's life, writings, sources, and of his usage of the French language as a vehicle of philosophical expression. In three Appendices, full lists are given of the neologisms, proper names, and transliterated Greek terms, found in the text. Altogether, this is a very satisfactory edition of a work which possesses considerable philological interest, and which is historically significant because it inaugurated the study of philosophy in the vernacular.

E. A. M.

The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition During the Middle Ages. Outlines of a Corpus Platonicum Medii Aevi. RAYMOND KLIBANSKY. London: The Warburg Institute. 1939. 58 pp.

The plan to supplement the *Aristoteles Latinus* by a *Corpus Platonicum Medii Aevi* has been sponsored by the British Academy, by the Union Académique Internationale, and by the Warburg Institute, and Mr. Klibansky with the help of several collaborators has started the preparatory work. The present essay announces the program and outlines the historical and bibliographical facts which have led to its conception.

Emphasizing the character of medieval Platonism as a continuous spiritual movement, Mr. Klibansky surveys its three main currents: the Arabic, the Byzantine, and the Latin. The Arabs possessed translations, derived mostly from Syrian versions, not only of several Platonic dialogues, but also of some Greek works dealing with Plato now lost in the original. Al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and others composed interpretative works on Plato. Translations brought these Arabic materials into medieval Jewish and occidental thought. Medieval Greek literature also shows a strong Platonic influence which can be traced from Dionysius the Areopagite through Psellus to Plethon. Through various channels these ma-

terials likewise had some influence on the West. Passing to the Latin tradition, Mr. Klibansky discusses the ancient translations, the pagan and Christian Latin authors who served as indirect sources of Platonism (especially Augustine and Boethius), and the indirect Greek sources made available in Latin (especially Dionysius the Areopagite). These materials were further increased after the twelfth century through new translations from Plato himself (Henricus Aristippus) and from Greek Platonists (e.g., Proclus was translated by William of Moerbeke). Of special importance was the study dedicated to the *Timaeus* and its interpreter, Chalcidius: there is an entire literature of newly discovered commentaries on the *Timaeus* which is closely connected with the School of Chartres. The ownership of several Latin manuscripts of Plato testifies to the Platonic studies of many thinkers and scholars up to Petrarch, Ficino, Bessarion, and Cusanus. From the beginning of the fifteenth century the materials were further increased through the new humanistic translations of Plato and of the Greek Platonists.

In the appendix Mr. Klibansky describes some recent discoveries in the Arabic field due especially to H. Ritter and R. Walzer, and reprints a letter of Marsilio Ficino which proves his knowledge of and dependence upon the medieval Platonic tradition.

The program proper (pp. 51–54) comprises for the *Plato Latinus* a bibliography and partial publication of the ancient and medieval translations including the quotations found in ancient authors, the ancient and medieval commentaries on Plato, the medieval translations from Greek commentators, and furthermore the biographic and apophthegmatic tradition about Plato, the *Pseudo-Platonica,* a collection of quotations from Plotinus, and an Iconography of Plato; for the *Plato Arabus* a collection of Plato quotations, the text of those Arabic works dealing with Plato, the translations from Greek commentators, Arabic recastings of Neoplatonic works (including the *Theologia Aristotelis* and the *Liber de causis*), and again the biographical tradition and the *Pseudo-Platonica.* A *Plato Hebraeus* and a *Plato Syrus* are planned as an appendix. Apparently there is as yet no plan for a *Plato Byzantinus.* Two indices and a few pictures conclude the volume.

Since the author intends the essay as a preliminary sketch, he does not try to give full indication of his sources, and his references to recent scholarship are rather scanty. Some additions and corrections might be made in the details of the exposition. I mention especially the Platonic traces in medieval non-philosophical literature, and the numerous humanistic translations of Plato and of the Greek Platonists, published even before the time of Ficino

(e.g., Petrus Balbus also translated Alcinous' *Epitoma de disciplina Platonis* for Cusanus, and Aurispa Hierocles' commentary on the *Verba aurea* attributed to Pythagoras). Mr. Klibansky looks only in a few cases beyond the bibliographical facts to the doctrinal content of the works he quotes, His purpose entitles him to this restriction, but the continuity of the Platonic tradition should be proved not only by the presence of certain translations and quotations from Plato, but also through the influence of Platonic theories upon medieval thinkers. The fact that Plato was read and quoted throughout the Middle Ages does not indicate that he was always known and understood in the same way, nor deny that Renaissance Platonism means something quite different from medieval Platonism (a fact proved even by the bibliographical data). I should also like to conceive the very term "tradition" in a somewhat different way. "Tradition" does not indicate merely the transmission and repetition of certain ideas formulated at the outset; it means a process of transformation, in which certain basic ideas are continually adapted to the intellectual problems and needs of successive periods. Thus it is not enough to say formally that certain elements in a later thinker agree with the original Plato and certain others do not; the very fact of which elements of Plato were received and which eliminated by a certain author and which non-platonic elements entered into the new doctrinal construction, is itself interesting for the history of the Platonic tradition. This is particularly true with the neoplatonists and their influence upon later authors. Mr. Klibansky is too ready to consider a concept as non-platonic simply because it is neoplatonic; he forgets that neoplatonism is based on certain essential elements of the platonic philosophy, though it neglects certain other essential elements which happen to be those mostly emphasized by modern, epistemological interpreters of Plato.

These objections, of course, do not touch the merits of Mr. Klibansky's essay. It is a very substantial outline, based on the results of recent scholarship and on many newly discovered materials, well written and intelligently presented. The program it announces is of the greatest importance for the history of Platonism and for intellectual history as a whole, and it is to be hoped that it can be carried on in spite of the present political situation.

P. O. K.

Der Aufbruch der Freiheit zur Gemeinschaft. Studien zur Philosophie des jungen Fichte. WILHELM WEISCHEDEL. Leipzig: Felix Meiner. 1939. xvi + 200 pp. 8 M.

The first half of this book consists of a lucid review of Fichte's conception of man as set down in his writings of 1793–1799, in

which, according to the author, Fichte posed the problems of the nature of man and of society in the purest form, free from the architectonic elaborations of his final system. This limitation also enables the author to avoid coming to grips with Fichte's inflammatory *Reden an die deutsche Nation,* a work which invites partisanship and commentary on the present crisis, from which the author scrupulously abstains. The second part explores Fichte's theory of society as founded on the conception of man. Fichte saw in self-consciousness, rather than in consciousness of moral obligation, the essential trait of man. But since awareness of others is a necessary condition of self-consciousness, it follows that man is inherently social. Moreover, self-responsibility leads to mutual or social responsibility.

Law in society is the idea of essential relations of free rational beings. Similarly, the state is an ethical necessity and citizenship is a natural status of free men. But the state is no self-sufficient metaphysical entity; as in Aristotle, it is the condition for the realization of the individuals comprising it. The right of revoluton, which Fichte defends, is not a right to enforce one's private view, but an obligation to sustain and perpetuate the nation. The people (*Volk*) are above the state and responsible, in the last analysis, to God only. Thus the church, too, is an ethically necessary institution; it impresses the individual with his responsibilities to himself and others and confronts him with the ethical aims of human life. Finally, a free society of the learned is also necessary in order to contemplate the destiny of man and furnish rational guidance. Fichte shows that the individual and society are but two poles of the same reality. Neither the one nor the other can be said to be absolutely prior.

The author emphasizes the liberal or anti-nationalist elements in Fichte's thought and points to his connections with the Aristotelian and Christian traditions, and with the political philosophies of Kant and the Enlightenment. But he shows that, unlike the Enlightenment, Fichte's conception of man roots in an ontological conception of the individual and humanity, which looks behind the psychological traits of man. The book as a whole exhibits a degree of objectivity and balance altogether remarkable in these turbulent days.

O. F. K.

History and Science. A Study of the Relation of Historical and Theoretical Knowledge. HUGH MILLER. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1939. x + 201 pp. $2.00.

The thesis of this book is that theoretical knowledge (whose objects are the structural patterns of nature and which is illus-

trated by mathematical physics) must be supplemented by historical knowledge (whose objects are the temporal continuities of nature and which is exhibited in the evolutionary sciences of biology and geology), if we are to have an adequate knowledge of nature. The structural patterns must thus be construed as characters of natural evolutions, and they can not without serious error be regarded as eternal and universal. Professor Miller pleads eloquently for the extension of the genetic method of inquiry, which he takes to be Darwin's most significant contribution, to fields now preëmpted by theoretical analysis; and he looks forward to the time when the physicist, freed from rationalistic preconceptions, will see particular facts in the manner of the biologist—as "individual causal connections so large and interconnected that they constitute some particular evolution or natural history." The first part of his book discusses the general relation between these two kinds of knowledge; the second part examines the rationalistic obstacles in the way of an evolutionary conception of nature, and discusses from this point of view the nature of logic, causality, determinism, and freedom; the final part surveys western thought as tending toward such a view of nature, sharply criticizes dialectic materialism as a pseudo-evolutionary "reductive" philosophy, and attempts to provide an intellectual basis for the belief in democracy and progress.

While Mr. Miller's book contains many sound observations, his main contention as to the central importance of genetic analysis for a sound theory of nature seems very dubious to this reviewer. It has long been a commonplace that the general theories of the sciences can yield no knowledge of specific fact if those theories are not supplemented by suitable initial conditions—conditions which constitute a species of historical knowledge; and few theoretical scientists to-day are unaware of the fact that their theories have only a contingent status and may not be universally valid. Mr. Miller obtains these conclusions as corollaries from his evolutionary conception of nature, but seems to overlook the fact that they can be reached from other premises. What evidence is there, however, for his view that theoretical analysis must be related to evolutionary inquiry so as to exhibit the temporal emergence of structures, or that the behaviors and structures of things are unintelligible if those behaviors and structures are not studied genetically? He offers nothing better than flat assertions that such is indeed the case. But biology and geology have developed into systems of reliable knowledge to the extent that they have abandoned the purely historical or evolutionary method and replaced it by the theoretico-experimental one. Unless one operates in terms

of the canons of a religious cosmogony and first beginnings—as indeed Mr. Miller appears to do—how could one on such a view ever understand anything? In spite of his claim that natural kinds or types are intelligible and are verified as objective only when guaranteed by historical analysis, the intelligibility and objectivity of chemical elements—which are also natural kinds—can not be put seriously into question, even though we possess no developmental account of those elements. Again, although there *may* be no fixed structures in nature, and although the structures physics discloses *may* be the outcome of evolutionary changes, what good reasons are there for believing that this is so? The truth seems to be that while Mr. Miller admits theoretical and historical knowledge as correlative, theoretical knowledge is his *bête noir;* and he is unguarded enough to assert that the contemporary strongholds of absolutism are not to be found in "dogmatic theology, reactionary legalism, or intransigeant conservatism," but in the mathematical sciences. His sharp strictures against the latter are perhaps understandable in view of his characterization of physics as an *experimental* as distinct from a *natural* science—on the ground that physics initiates reactions other than those "found" in nature to the exclusion, apparently, of using processes "observable" in nature. It is, however, by no means easy to understand where the sharp line is to be drawn between experimentation and observation, how our conjectures concerning causal factors are to be controlled without the former, and why—in view of the contributions of experimental genetics and cytology to our understanding of the mechanism of evolution—Mr. Miller continues to regard biology as the preëminent historical science.

E. N.

Kleines Lehrbuch des Positivismus. Einführung in die empiristische Wissenschaftsauffassung. RICHARD VON MISES. (Library of Unified Science, Book Series, Vol. I.) The Hague: W. P. Van Stockum & Zoon. 1939. American Agent, The University of Chicago Press. xii + 467 pp. $5.50.

This new series of books begins auspiciously with an exposition of a "moderate positivism," which is perhaps best classified as a version of scientific, experimental rationalism. Professor von Mises agrees in the main with the standpoint of the Vienna Circle and with its emphasis upon the critical analysis of language, but rejects several of its more "radical" contentions; his aim is to exhibit the power of the analytical methods of reflective inquiry, and his argument is directed in part against obscurantist and anti-rational tendencies. His book covers a large canvas, and it surveys not only the

topics familiar in discussions of science (e.g., the structure of theories, verification, causality, probability, induction, vitalism, holism, etc.), but attempts to show the bearing of logical analysis upon issues in historiography, the philosophy of law, metaphysics, religion, poetry, art, and ethics. The book is simply and clearly written, it is full of interesting illustrations, and no one who reads it will credit as well-founded the tiresome accusation that contemporary positivists are myopic dogmatists who can see nothing beyond printed words.

Professor von Mises departs from positions associated with the Vienna Circle at several points. He adopts a more tolerant criterion of significance than is frequently advanced by "operationalists," with the consequence that he is most circumspect in assigning to the category of the meaningless statements he classifies as "metaphysical." He espouses, in a reinterpreted form, Mach's doctrine of sensational elements, and accepts as the basic protocols for all reliable knowledge certain observational statements which have the property of being both simple and incorrigible. He follows Gonseth in viewing logic as formulating the most general properties of all objects whatsoever, although he also accepts the view that the asserted statements of logic are tautologies which assert nothing about the world. He finds no good reason for accepting a physicalism which requires that the principles of all disciplines must be deducible from those of physics, which disallows introspection as a legitimate mode of observation, or which maintains that the specific methods and concepts of the science of physics must in principle suffice in all domains of inquiry. In addition, Professor von Mises regards metaphysics as being simply a primitive but uncritical form of science, he assigns a certain cognitive worth to poetry and art, and he adopts an interest theory of ethics and a sociological interpretation of normative judgments. His book concludes with the brave belief that the critical apparatus he has surveyed will not be abandoned however dark the future may appear, and with the hope that it will come to be used more extensively in the domain of social studies.

Though the main argument of the book is well sustained, several of its contentions are not clearly formulated or adequately established. Just two points will be mentioned. Thus, what Professor von Mises has to say on logic as a kind of generalized physics is no less puzzling than Gonseth's own statements of that view, especially since for the former logical statements are without empirical content. Again, although his aim is to exorcise every form of absolutism, it is curious to find him committed to incorrigible protocol statements and to have him espouse the strange view that the real

protocols of the physicist are pointings (*Hinweisen*) to something immediately presented. It is perhaps also worth noting that in spite of Professor von Mises' wide reading, most of his references are to continental writers; and I have been able to detect an incidental reference to William James as the only recognition that writers on this side of the Atlantic have contributed something to the current of scientific rationalism.

E. N.

Die Sachlichkeit der Wissenschaft. Wissenschaft und Weisheit. Zwei Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre. MAX WUNDT. (Philosophie und Geschichte, 67.) Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). 1940. 47 pp. 1.50 M.

In the first of these two essays Professor Wundt presents a redefinition of objectivity which is to make the term applicable to the *Geisteswissenschaften* as well as the natural sciences. He points out that the negative, methodological definition, usual among positivists and scientists, is based upon the assumption of an opposition between self and external world. Provided that this opposition is not assumed and that self and world are in essence one, we are able to affirm the objectivity of other knowledge than merely the "*Wissenschaft des nicht Wissenswerten.*"

This conclusion leads directly to the second essay, in which Professor Wundt examines the relation between science, the sum of object-knowledge and philosophy (in the guise of *Weisheit*) or self-knowledge. The conclusions here are in line with the romanticist reaction against the "barren formalism" of positivism. He envisions in philosophy, as vital knowledge of the self and of the limits of knowledge, a resolution of the dichotomy, inherent in contemporary science and technique, between self and external world, between the living fullness of experience and formal, mechanical systems.

G. C. S.

Esiste una morale? Saggio sulla morale come filosofia. GUILIO COLESANTI. Catania: "Etna." 1937. 94 pp. 5 lire. (Translated by Eva Osta under the title *La morale supérieure.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. 1940. xii + 113 pp. 15 frs.)

There is a good deal of reviewing of time-worn ethical issues in this essay in order to arrive at the conclusion *ipsa philosophia moralis,* at least in the sense that ethics is the practice of philosophy in its widest significance. Evidently aroused by the completely sceptical teachings of his compatriot Guiseppe Rensi in his *Critica*

della morale, the author undertakes a roundabout Nietzschean defense of a higher ethics "beyond good and evil" of which minor moralities are only the politics. "Ethics exists for only one reason—to satisfy our curiosity. . . . Rensi argues that this curiosity is a brain disease. . . . Even so, man always has the right to follow the path laid out by that sublime madness . . . it is the only way to vanquish the fear of death and the fear of life . . . *La philosophie c'est l'honneur même de l'humanité.*"

H. A. L.

Civilization in East and West. An Introduction to the Study of Human Progress. H. N. SPALDING. New York: Oxford University Press. London: Humphrey Milford. 1939. Pp. xv + 334. $4.25.

"To survey the past and to surmise the future" (p. viii), sums up the purpose of this book. The author interprets history as progressive beginning with the biological state of primitive man and passing on through the materialist state, the moral state, the moral-spiritual state, the spiritual state, and looking forward to the coming of the kingdom of God on earth. The process of man's development he finds to be logical and more or less uniform. Thus: "First a moral or spiritual culture arises precariously among the individualized few. This civilization slowly disintegrates through war, or schism, or revolution. . . . Finally statesmen restore order by founding either a dictatorship on materialist principles or a strong government on moral principles" (p. 11). The author finds the moral state and democracy to be the same thing and tries to show that dictatorships are but temporary flurries on the stream of democracy. That he believes that there is continuous progress is shown by his statement: "Slowly the pearl is cleansed of the mud; slowly moral and spiritual society emerges from the materialist and the biological, as the biological once emerged .from the society of the apes. Thus civilization is like a palimpsest, with the worse written below and gradually fading out, though now and again showing through in big patches; and the better above, gradually being re-written more clearly and permanently" (p. 78).

Now that every nation affects every other nation and isolation is impossible, the fundamental question he proposes is, will society follow its materialist or its idealist leaders? (p. 291). His formula for achieving the ideal state is: first of all, a change of mind in all states, and especially in those that make power and wealth their supreme end. And secondly, there must be a synthesis of all the different kinds of good found in all states. This huge task of synthesis will be the work of a host of men and women, laboring through

the centuries (pp. 294, 297). Or, to put it another way: "To bring about a Renaissance in the full sense, therefore, three things are needed: to resuscitate the Good that each civilization sees, to harmonize it with the Good of others, and finally to unite every kind of Good until reason made whole sees Reality as a Whole" (p. 298).

The author is in the tradition of Plato, Sir Thomas More, and Confucius dreaming of an ideal state; and like Confucius he dreams it in terms of the past, idealized. The real Reality becomes in this case the sum total of all the unfulfilled ideals and goods of all states. It is taken for granted, and unjustifiably, so the reviewer thinks, that when all goods are shuffled together and brought to the attention of the world by moral education, man's reason will be made whole and will see Reality as a Whole. This point of view takes it for granted, as did the Greeks, that when men know to do good they will naturally do it. The Greeks were disappointed, since men knew to do good and did it not.

The reviewer feels that the structure of progression imposed on human history by the author is unjustified. A unilinear measure of civilization is created which begins with the biologic state and ends with the kingdom of God on earth. This is reminiscent of the efforts of such men as Lubbock, Spencer, Tylor, Fraser, and Lang to create a unilinear measure for the development of religions. Whether it be comparative religion or comparative civilization surely no unilinear measure can be employed to adequately appraise either.

However, in these troubled times, one can only feel sympathetic with the effort to find solutions for our problems. The book contains a wealth of fact and information drawn from all the world, ancient and modern, oriental and occidental, which is well worth considering in the light of the author's special emphasis.

K. P. L.

OTHER NEW BOOKS AND JOURNALS

Trinity College Bulletin, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2. A List of Books for a College Student's Reading, edited by Harry T. Costello. Third edition, rewritten. Hartford, Conn.: Trinity College. 1940. 125 pp.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW. Vol. XLIX, 4. Diocles of Carystus: A New Pupil of Aristotle: *Werner Jaeger.* Cournot's Doctrine of Philosophical Probability: *C. T. Ruddick.* Some Common Misinterpretations of the Kantian Ethics: *H. H. Schroeder.* Discussion—Ethical Empiricism and Moral Heteronomy: *Eliseo Vivas.* Functionalism and the Intentional Act: *A. C. Garnett.*

PHILOSOPHY. Vol. XV, No. 59. In Memoriam: Professor John H. Muirhead. The Ethics of Pacifism: *A. D. Ritchie.* Hegel's Dialectic in Historical Philosophy: *J. O. Wisdom.* Archimedes and Eddington: *G. B. Brown.* "In the Beginning . . .": *B. A. Farrell.* Discussions—Eddington's "Philosophy of Physical Science." Hegel and Prussianism. Fascism and Nazism. Philosophical Survey: Philosophy in Italy.

We print below a list of selected articles from the following publications:

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Vol. 9, No. 2. The Dilemma of the Present-Day Moralist: *Harold Chapman Brown.*

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY. Vol. 5, Number 3. The Modes of the Question Why: *R. M. MacIver.* Sports in the Nation: *Percy Hughes.* Broader Value Concepts in Economics: *Joseph Mayer.*

TIJDSCHRIFT VOOR PHILOSOPHIE. 2e Jaargang, Nr 1. Het probleem van de philosophie der geschiedenis: *J. De Brandt.* A so-called Metaphysicks of John Locke: *F. Heinemann.*

Revue d'Histoire de la Philosophie et d'Histoire Générale de la Civilisation. Fasc. 27–28. L'amour, la nature et la société chez J.-J. Rousseau. *La nouvelle Héloïse,* roman à thèse: *René Hubert.*

RIVISTA DI FILOSOFIA NEO-SCOLASTICA. Anno XXXII, Fasc. 1. La metafisica di J. G. Hamann: *E. C. Salzer.*

GREGORIANUM. Anno XXI, Fasc. 1. La raison et la charité: *A. Bremond.*

JOURNAL DE PSYCHOLOGIE. XXXVIe Année, Nos. 1–2. Utilisation possible du schématisme kantien pour une théorie de la perception: *P. Lachièze-Rey.*

SCHOLASTIK. XV. Jahrgang, Heft 1. Analogie und Chiffre. Zur Transzendenz in der Scholastik und bei Jaspers: *Johannes Bapt. Lotz.* Die mathematisch-logistische Symbolsprache in philosophischer Sicht: *Caspar Nink.*

PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW. Vol. 47, No. 3. Observable Behaviors: *A. F. Bentley.*

HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW. Volume XXXIII, Number 2. The Philosophy of Incarnation: *John Laird.*

NOTES AND NEWS

In accordance with the special wish expressed to Mr. Stanley Unwin by the late Professor J. H. Muirhead, the Library of Philosophy, for which Professor Muirhead was responsible since its inception by him over fifty years ago, will in future be edited by Dr. J. E. Turner, Reader in Philosophy in the University of Liver-

pool, who has been collaborating with Professor Muirhead as assistant editor for some time.

We print below the preliminary announcement of the Fortieth Annual Meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association:

The 1940 meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association will be held at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, from Thursday evening to Saturday noon, December 26th to 28th. Following this meeting there will be a symposium on the general topic of science and values, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Philosophical Association as a whole. Invited speakers from both bodies will participate.

The plenary session of the Eastern Division will be devoted to a symposium on "The Nature of Mind." Professors Brand Blanshard, C. I. Lewis and W. H. Sheldon have been invited to read papers on this subject.

Professors J. S. Bixler, R. L. Calhoun and H. L. Friess have been invited to discuss "The Problem of Religious Knowledge." There will be a session devoted to the problem of "The Meaning and Method of Phenomenology"; members of the Association are invited to submit papers on this topic. Three other sessions are open for unsolicited papers.

The Association for Symbolic Logic is arranging to meet with the Eastern Division, and will hold a session in conjunction with our program on the morning of Saturday, December 28th.

Arrangements with *The Journal of Philosophy* for the publication of abstracts of papers to be read at the meeting require that such abstracts (not more than 300 words in length) be in the hands of the Secretary by November 1st. The program committee requests that a draft of the complete paper be submitted with the abstract. The limit of 20 minutes in reading time for papers presented at the meeting will be strictly enforced except in those cases where the committee makes some prior arrangement with the speaker.

The complete program, including information as to arrangements for the accommodation of those attending the meeting, will be issued early in December.

MAURICE MANDELBAUM, Secretary,
Swarthmore College,
Swarthmore, Pa.